



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Rodney Gonzales, Assistant City Manager

DATE: November 5, 2019

SUBJECT: Update on Homelessness Initiatives

This memorandum is a continuation of updates on cross-departmental initiatives to address issues surrounding homelessness.

Homelessness Services Delivery and Outreach

- Exits from Homelessness through Housing and Other Positive Means: Housing individuals experiencing homelessness and providing supportive services is the City's highest priority. Efforts made are in conjunction with many community partners and service providers. In particular, the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) is the lead designated Continuum of Care (CoC) agency and tracks data through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Individuals and families in need of housing and supportive services are surveyed through the Coordinated Entry System (CES) so that the correct exit or positive diversion strategy can be employed. Data on individuals and families housed will be updated and posted on the City's website. The following results have been achieved as of November 3rd:
 - Since August 1, 2019, 517 individuals have been housed or exited from homelessness, representing 295 households.
 - Since January 1, 2019, 1,741 individuals have been housed or exited from homelessness, representing 1,107 households.
- Guided Path Pilot Project: As mentioned in a previous update, the Homeless Strategy Office in coordination with City departments, ECHO, the Local Mental Health Authority – Integral Care, and other service provider partners has engaged in a Guided Path Pilot Project. Through Phase One, which consisted of outreach and assessment, individuals outside and around the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH) were surveyed and assessed. Through Phase Two, which consists of service engagement, the following results have been achieved as of November 3rd:
 - 7 individuals have been housed
 - 2 individuals have been reunited with their families
 - 3 individuals accepted respite care
 - 76 individuals are enrolled or pending enrollment into appropriate programs that lead to permanent housing
 - 23 individuals are not yet matched with programs for enrollment

Results through Phase Two will be updated weekly on Monday's and posted to the City's website page for the [Guided Path Program](#). Phase Three, which consists of sustainment and

accountability, is being built out. Included in this phase will be increased outreach activity, police monitoring and enforcement, cleaning of the areas, and a perceived impact assessment conducted within the area.

- Encampment Strategy: On October 29, 2019, staff provided an overview of an Encampment Strategy under development and in partnership with ECHO. The Encampment Strategy would scale up efforts undertaken through the Guided Path Pilot Project. The key to a successful Encampment Strategy is the inclusion of immediate low-barrier, affordable housing units. As such, City staff are pursuing motels which can initially serve as bridge housing and eventually converted into permanent supportive housing. The motel units would be available for individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness and those on the Coordinated Entry System (CES) list. Significant updates on this effort will be provided to Council at the appropriate time.

Public Safety

- Information on Revised Ordinances Relating to Camping, Sitting, and Lying: On October 17, 2019, the City Council made several revisions to the City ordinances that prohibits camping, lying, or sitting in certain areas. The ordinance changes went into effect on October 28, 2019. The City's website page for homelessness services has been updated to reflect changes to the ordinances.
- Outreach and Enforcement Conducted in Accordance with Ordinance Relating to Camping: Per the Ordinance, City staff conducted outreach to individuals within the area of the ARCH on October 28, 2019. A list of individuals who are alleged to be in violation of the Ordinance has been created, and enforcement of the Ordinance for these individuals will not be made until such time that non-shelter housing has been offered. Enforcement of the Ordinance will proceed for individuals not on the list.
- Updated Training Bulletins: With the recent changes to the sit, lie, camping ordinances, the Austin Police Department (APD) issued revised training bulletins to inform officers how they should handle cases.

Housing

- Recent Rental Housing Projects: With the \$250 million affordable housing bond (\$94 million of which is dedicated to Rental Housing Development Assistance), coupled with a historic infusion of resources into the Housing Trust Fund, FY2019-2020 will provide increased resources for affordable housing development, including Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units.
 - On August 8, 2019, the Austin Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) approved funding for eight affordable housing projects, totaling more than \$15 million in loans, resulting in more than 300 income-restricted units, approximately half of which are supportive housing. Of those 300 income-restricted units, 50 units will serve households at or below 30% Median Family Income (MFI) and 14 units will be dedicated to ECHO's CES.
 - Council received a memorandum on August 2, 2019 providing details on these developments. This information is available at the following link: [August 2, 2019 Memo to Mayor and Council](#)
 - On November 14, 2019, City Council will consider nearly \$12.5 million in funding for eight affordable housing developments, which would result in 403 income-restricted units. Two developments will result in additional units dedicated to ECHO's CES.
 - One development, City Heights, will provide 180 units of affordable senior housing. Of the 180 units, 120 units will serve seniors at or below 50% MFI and ten (10) units will serve seniors at or below 30% MFI and will come from ECHO's CES.

- Additionally, Vi Collina will provide 71 income-restricted units at or below 50% MFI. The development will offer 31 2-bedroom units and 17 3-bedroom units for very low-income families. NHCD staff will allocate \$245K in Housing Trust Fund made available in the FY 20 budget. This combined with GO Bonds will achieve an additional 5 Continuum of Care Units.

Communications

- Cross-Departmental Communications: The joint communication team meeting with 12 other department public information staff meets weekly to coordinate communications efforts across the organization. Recently published stories include:
 - [Growing affordable housing stock is vital to addressing homelessness](#)
 - [Those experiencing homelessness help clean up with the City of Austin's Violet Bag Project](#)
- Media: CPIO has and will continues to create and promote content regarding the City's efforts to address homelessness. Below is a status of current and planned content through ATXN and social media:
 - Navigation Center (CityView): *Ran 10/7 – 10/13*
 - Violet Bag Project (CityView): *Currently running*
 - Homeless Outreach Street Team (HOST) Team Highlights: *Production in progress*
 - Underpass clean-ups: *Production in progress*
 - Downtown Austin Community Court 20th Anniversary: *Production in progress*
 - Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Team Training: *Production in progress*
 - City of Austin version of the Orlando "[Cardboard Stories](#)" Video: *Pre-production*
 - ARCH Updates: *In development*
 - Encampment Strategy: *In development*

In conclusion, City staff continue to emphasize homelessness as the City's highest priority. City departments are committed to continued scaling City services to provide a higher level of service.

CC: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
 CMO Executive Team
 City Department Directors and Assistant Directors